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ABSTRACT

Literature on counseling adult college students is extremely limited; few if any training programs are currently operating with the purpose of preparing counseling specialists in adult education. Moreover, college/university orientation programs for new entering adult part-time evening students are virtually nonexistent. Recognizing the need for supportive services, Drake University initiated an orientation and counseling program for new entering adult evening students during fall and spring semesters of 1972-73. Individuals were randomly assigned to a treatment group (28 students) and a control group (27 students) and pretested and post-tested. The orientation program, consisting of seven weekly 1 1/2 hour meetings, was geared to increased self-understanding, major developmental tasks of college students, the development of self-appraisal and self-direction, and better emotional development. A unique feature of the program was the development of a simulation game, BALANCE, to help students in their adjustment to the college experience. Statistical analysis revealed that students participating in the orientation and counseling program had a significantly higher grade point average at the end of the semester. (EA)

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Effectiveness of An Orientation And Counseling Program

For Adult Evening Students At Drake University

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INTRODUCTION

We all know that higher education is in an era when budgets are extremely tight, programs are being discontinued and staffs reduced. Historically, when this happens the area of student personnel services is the first and hardest hit. However, you should have little or no concern for student personnel services for adults in higher education, because they are virtually nonexistent anyway, so an austerity period won't really affect them.

Now my statement is rather bold and may offend some but my research bares out this position. I do, however, want to share with you the results of some research and suggest a rather inexpensive yet highly effective approach to assisting adults in adjusting to a college atmosphere. For the purpose of this paper, my definition of adult students, and that utilized in my research, is: those individuals enrolling in a college level program for the first time. In addition, my research findings are limited to those adults that enrolled in an evening college program.

BACKGROUND

Today, higher education in America is increasingly the education of adults. Recent reports from the American Council on Education (1, 2) and the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (3) support this view and state that the absolute numbers of students carrying adult responsibilities will increase substantially in the next decade and their proportion among all students will be greater than it is today.

The development and growth of counseling services as a supportive service for adults engaged in higher education has not, however, kept pace with this rapid expansion of the field. Colleges and universities have increasingly given attention to supportive services for full-time youthful students but have, for the most part, ignored the adult part-time student. Only until recently

has the professional area related to adult counseling come to be recognized. (Again, for the purposes of this paper, I am assuming the acceptance and agreement that supportive services for adult students are a desirable and beneficial service.)

One is handicapped in reviewing the literature on counseling adults who are engaged in higher education -- it is extremely limited. Palais (10, p. 47) makes this evident when he states, "almost none of the available texts on student personnel considers the application of these services to evening students". Affirming this, Porter (11, p. 7) points out the following, "Special programs exist in most universities to train elementary, secondary and college level counselors but few if any training programs are currently operating with the purpose of preparing counseling specialists in adult education. In fact, a review of college bulletins has failed to come up with one university in the United States which offers a course in counseling adult students". Knox (9, p. 3) observed that typically student personnel services revolve only around registering students and giving information. (For the purposes of this paper I will not go into the outcomes of counseling and related research on self-concept and adjustment of adults, attitude formation and measurement, academic accomplishments of adults and motivation toward learning of adults, as these are again to be taken as worthwhile contributions to the total scope of this paper.)

Orientation programs at colleges and universities for new entering adult part-time evening students are virtually nonexistent. Those that do exist are not systematically developed nor sophisticatedly evaluated. In the 1971 report "A survey of Policies and Practices in Various Evening Colleges and Divisions of Colleges and Universities in the United States," (7) only 21% of 146 institutions reported any orientation services for evening students. In fact, there is a trend toward a discontinuence of orientation and counseling

support services for adult evening students. The Research Committee of the Association for Continuing Higher Education (formerly the Association of University Evening Colleges) (7) reported a decline from 31.1% to 27.4% from 1968 to 1971 of responding institutions offering an orientation program. This author specifically wrote to seventeen different institutions listed in the AUEC survey as having an orientation program to ascertain the nature and scope of their orientation program for adults. The following is a list of those institutions:

Baldwin-Wallace College Berea, Ohio	San Diego Community College San Diego, California
Boston College Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts	Drury College Springfield, Missouri
City College of the University of New York New York, New York	Jefferson State Jr. College Birmingham, Alabama
Mohawk Community College Utica, New York	Louisiana State University New Orleans, Louisiana
Northeastern University Boston, Massachusetts	University of Detroit Detroit, Michigan
Philadelphia College of Textiles and Sciences Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	University of Maryland College Park, Maryland
St. Josephs Evening College Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	University of Tennessee Chattanooga, Tennessee
St. Louis University St. Louis, Missouri	Wichita State University Wichita, Kansas
	Xavier University Cincinnati, Ohio

An analysis of the information received leads this author to believe that there is a wide range in scope and depth of orientation programs. Programs were reported to be anywhere from 15 minutes in length to a two hour seminar held monthly for the duration of the semester. The most extensive program uncovered by this author was one being conducted at St. Louis University, where Locke (8) pointed out that the objective of the program was to have students gain college

skills and develop career planning. The method of this orientation was a monthly meeting lasting for the duration of the semester. Subsequent follow-up for this paper revealed that no such evaluation was ever completed and the program has been discontinued (13). However, the predominate pattern was a one hour meeting held during the first week of classes with appropriate university officials present to answer questions and to outline policies and procedures of the institution. In no instance was any formal evaluation attempted or reported. The typical answer to the question of whether any evaluation of results of the program could be sent was "We have not run any type of evaluation on the effect of our orientation".

NATURE OF STUDY

Recognizing the necessity for supportive services for new entering adult students at Drake University, an orientation and counseling program was held for the first time for new entering adult evening students during the fall and spring semesters of 1972 and 1973. Individuals meeting pre-selected criteria were randomly assigned to a treatment group and a control group. Both groups were pre-tested and post-tested, each completed a personal data form and additional information was procured from the Office of the Registrar at Drake University.

An Orientation Program was developed for adult evening students which consisted of seven weekly meetings lasting one and one-half hours each. Appendix A is an outline of the program. Objectives of the Orientation Program were:

1. to provide increased self-knowledge and an orientation to college on the part of the participants
2. to develop a better understanding of themselves
3. to develop an understanding of major developmental tasks of college students

4. to gain insights into better emotional development
5. and to develop self-appraisal and self-direction.

A unique feature of this orientation program consisted of the development of a simulation game entitled "BALANCE". This game was developed by L. Wayne Bryan of Drake University and will be explained in a later section of this paper. In addition to the unique simulation game employed in the Orientation Program, the Iowa Department of Public Instruction's Communications Skills Package was also utilized to provide development of communication and study skills. Students participating in the program also toured various facilities on the campus such as the Counseling Center, Reading and Study Skills Clinic, Testing Center and the Library. In addition, representatives from the Admissions Office discussed with these students proper procedures for admissions and gave them an overview of the University's policies and procedures. Following each weekly session a group counseling session was held for the purpose of feedback and planning future sessions.

Students enrolling part time in the evening division for the first time during the fall and spring semesters of 1972 and 1973 at Drake University were subjects in this study. The research design called for selecting students at random for participation in an orientation and counseling program and random assignment to a control group. Subjects in this study were drawn from a population of 81 new entering adult evening students in the 1972 fall semester and 68 new entering adult evening students in the 1973 spring semester. Total N for the treatment group was 28; total N for the control group was 27. Table 1 reflects information on the characteristics of the study population.

TABLE 1 CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY POPULATION ACCORDING TO SELECTED PERSONAL FACTORS.

Category	Treatment Group		Control Group	
	Number	%	Number	%
1. Sex:				
a. Male	13	46.43	15	55.56
b. Female	15	53.57	12	44.44
2. Age:				
a. 16-25	15	53.57	15	55.56
b. 26-35	6	21.43	8	29.63
c. 36-45	4	14.29	1	3.70
d. 46-55	3	10.71	3	11.11
3. Previous Education Level:				
a. less than high school	1	3.57	0	0
b. high school	11	39.29	21	77.78
c. some college	16	57.14	6	22.22
4. Employment Status:				
a. employed full-time	24	85.71	27	100.00
b. employed part-time	1	3.57	0	0
c. unemployed	3	10.71	0	0
5. Job Level:				
a. professional, managerial, technical	10	35.71	10	37.04
b. clerical, sales, service	10	35.71	14	51.85
c. industrial, construction	3	10.71	2	7.41
d. other	5	17.86	1	3.70
6. Current Income Level:				
a. 0-3,999	10	35.71	7	25.93
b. 4,000-7,999	7	25.00	11	40.74
c. 8,000-11,999	7	25.00	6	22.22
d. 12,000-over	4	14.29	3	11.11

Since one of the measurement factors under study was a change in self-concept, the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (5) was utilized for measuring this factor. A modification of the Semantic Distance Questionnaire (SDQ) developed by Weaver (12) was used as a measuring instrument to ascertain attitude toward an educational institution.

Specifically, the null hypotheses tested were:

1. There is no significant difference in self-concept between students participating in an orientation and counseling program and those students who did not participate in such a program.

2. There is no significant difference in attitude toward an educational institution between students participating in an orientation and counseling program and those students who did not participate in such a program.
3. There is no significant difference in grade point average attained at the end of the semester in study between students participating in an orientation and counseling program and those students who did not participate in such a program.
4. There is no significant difference in stated educational goals between students participating in an orientation and counseling program and those students who did not participate in such a program.
5. There is no significant difference in the rate of re-enrollment between students participating in an orientation and counseling program and those students who did not participate in such a program.

The findings of the study were reported in sequence of the five stated null hypotheses as follows:

1. Null hypotheses one - accepted
2. Null hypotheses two - accepted
3. Null hypotheses three - rejected
4. Null hypotheses four - accepted
5. Null hypotheses five - accepted

An analysis of variance statistic and a chi-square statistic were utilized in making comparisons between and among the groups. (For the purpose of this paper I will not report all the data that the study generated; however, this information is available to anyone that is interested.)

It was concluded ($p < .01$, $F=8.4551$) from a study that those students participating in the orientation and counseling program achieved a significantly higher grade point average at the end of the semester in study. In addition, significance at the .05 level was found in relation to age. Those students in the 26-and-over age category did significantly better than those in the 16-to-25 age category. Although not statistically significant, there were more students who re-enrolled following

participation than those who did not participate; 37.4% of the control group re-enrolled and 50.0% of the experimental group re-enrolled the following term. From an analysis of the data collected for this study several observations seem in order:

1. Overall, there are beneficial outcomes for both the students who participate and the institution that conducts an orientation and counseling program for adult evening students.
2. Although not statistically significant, there seemed to be a directional trend toward a better self-concept and attitude on the part of the orientation program participating students.
3. Also, though not statistically significant, there were more students who re-enrolled following participation in the program than those who did not participate.

In order to fully determine if this type of supportive service is truly beneficial to the student and the institution and to suggest additional research for the field of adult education, the following recommendations are made:

1. A replication of this study utilizing larger numbers of students should be made since this was the first study of its kind conducted at Drake University.
2. A modification of the program's length, depth, techniques and material should be made to determine if better methods can be employed.
3. The development of observations and measurements over the duration of an entire academic year or two should be tested.
4. Future research studies should include an analysis of learning of individual students in order to truly attempt to recognize individual differences.

SIMULATION-GAME FOR ADULT EVENING STUDENTS

In the last part of this paper, I want to explain in more detail a unique simulation-game that was developed for the Orientation Program. BALANCE, a game for adult and part-time students was developed by L. Wayne Bryan. The objectives of the game are:

1. to simulate the experience of college for students who

are returning to college, beginning college after a break, or taking a partial load while working

2. to help these non-sequential students have a successful experience in a simulated college environment
3. to become acquainted with the nomenclature and pressures they may endure
4. to learn to balance time between the requirements made of them.

The game takes approximately 30 minutes to play and only 6-8 "game facilitators" are needed. Present staff and/or student volunteers can be involved. During the game, students may choose to work toward a degree or toward 30 or 60 Hour Certificates. To obtain a degree, they must take two lower level courses and two upper level courses.

During this game, they learn the procedures for registering, paying for courses taken, understanding prerequisites, dealing with a bureaucracy, fulfilling self-imposed goals, celebrating achievements, dealing with non-academic life situations, and having a counselor to help with their problems.

Each student begins with \$750. He or she is required to pay a \$150 registration fee for each course taken -- unless a scholarship is awarded by a chance card.

To take a course, the student pays fees to the Registrar and receives a Registration Certificate. He or she takes this certificate to the Registration Table and chooses the Course Card for the course he or she wishes to take. The Course Card will direct the student to perform a certain activity e.g., "Go to the lecture room, hear the English lecture and take notes" .

Having completed the required activity, the student brings the Course Card to the Scoring Table, gets a Scoring Card for the course and scores him or herself. At that table the student also receives a 30-Hour Certificate, a 60-Hour Certificate, or a Degree when appropriate. Each student further receives a Chance Card to

simulate a life situation to which he or she must respond. Some Chance Cards are distributed at random during the time when students are working on their course work.

Students also have the possibility of passing courses by CLEP exams, getting credit for experience, and having prerequisites waived. Chance cards, course requirements, and the interaction with other students are the dynamics of their life during the game.

Each student is responsible for him or herself in working through this sequence toward the degree or certificate he or she desires. A chief point -- BALANCE provides for a counselor who is available to students. This helps them understand that when they don't know an answer, when they run short of money, when the pressure gets heavy, or whenever they need to ask a question, the college provides that counseling. "Ask for help, don't try to go it alone", is the principle to be learned.

When the allotted time has expired, students and game facilitators discuss what has occurred. It is important to talk about frustrations and joys experienced in the game. It should be the chief purpose of the discussion to point out the "real world" events simulated by the game and how students can be prepared to deal effectively with them.

Figure 1 shows the floor plan utilized for the playing of the game. It is only a suggested floor plan and would need to be modified depending on the size of the group.

CONCLUSION

The intent and purpose of this paper was to report on an alternative method for assisting adults who are entering college for the first time or returning after a long lapse of time. The program described was developed for

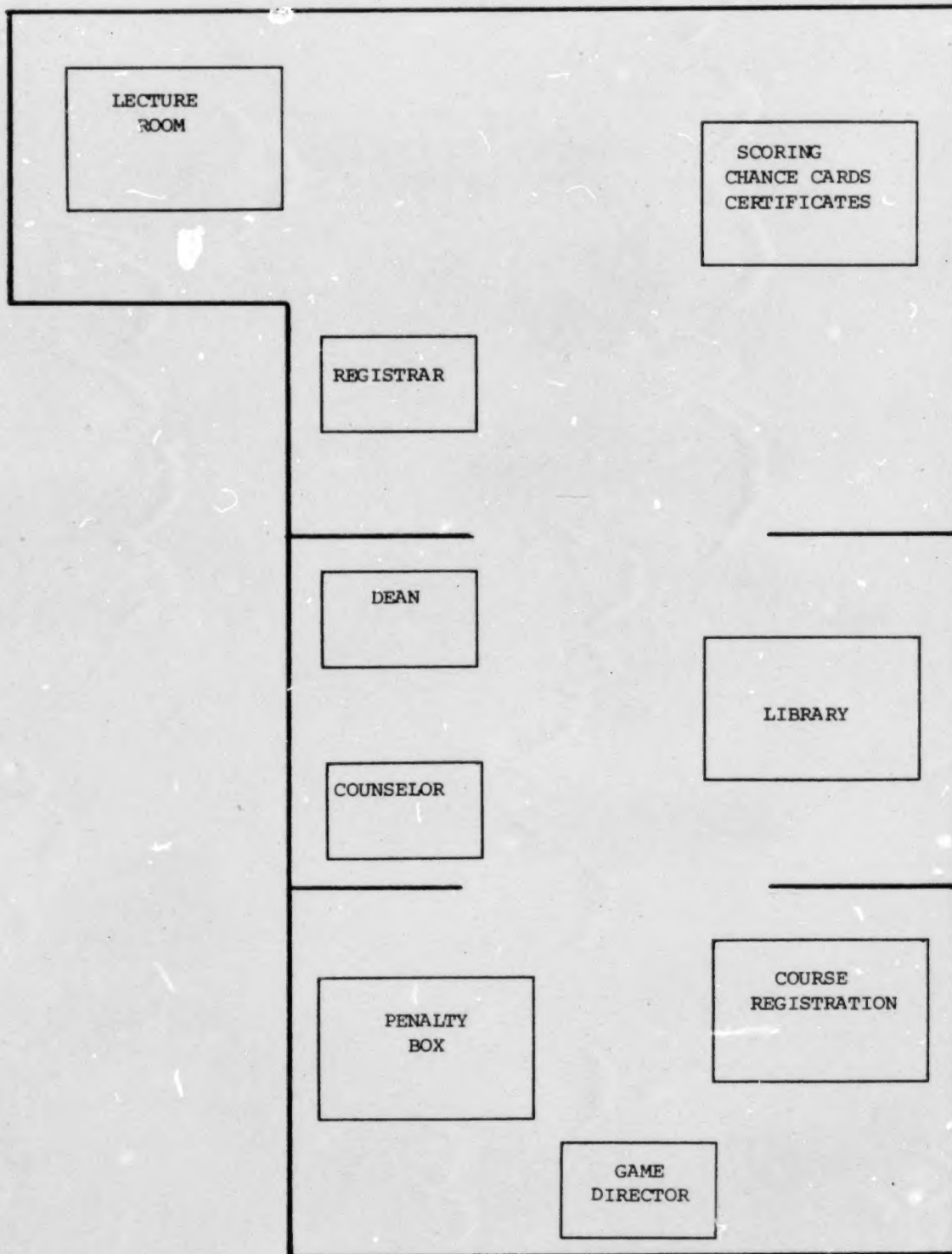


FIGURE 1. FLOOR PLAN FOR SIMULATION-GAME "BALANCE".

the purpose of assisting students in adjusting to an academic environment and to help them maximize their learning. In order to accomplish this, the results of an experimentally designed research study were reported.

For many adults who have not been in an academic setting for a number of years, there is often times an experience of difficulty in adjusting to the demands and rigors of the classroom.

A brief overview of the literature pointed out that supportive services for adults are virtually nonexistent in most colleges and universities today. Those that do exist in the form of orientation and counseling programs are not systemically designed nor sophisticatedly evaluated to determine effectiveness. If as Hirsch (6, p. 4) states that by the year 2000, the biggest business in this nation will be the higher education of adults, then it therefore, behoves us to design an innovative approach to college orientation for adults and to provide a counseling service to new entering adult evening students.

If today as the American Council on Education and the recent Carnegie Commission on Higher Education predict, higher education in America is increasingly becoming the education of adults, then, supportive services of a unique and appropriate nature will be needed for the adult students. Because the literature is virtually bare of research findings on the effectiveness of orientation and counseling programs for adult evening students in higher education, it is hoped that this study does, indeed, light just one little candle in a world of darkness.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ORIENTATION PROGRAM

DRAKE UNIVERSITY: 1972-73

Mondays: From 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

SESSION I: Introduction and Orientation to Program - A general overview of the program and the completion of background information, and gathering of data.

SESSION II: Simulation Game - A game designed to familiarize students with the college atmosphere. In one evening, learn to cope with the pressures, rewards, and responsibilities of earning a college degree.

SESSION III: This is Drake - An overview of Drake by the Admissions Office: colleges, degrees, services, facilities, etc. Film: "Adventure of the Asterisk".

SESSION IV: Communication Skills Lab - Activities and exercises designed to increase communication skills; to provide better understanding of the communication process; to improve study habits.

SESSION V: Communication Skills Lab - Continuation of the previous week's activities.

SESSION VI: Student Services Center Tour - you will gain a first-hand look at services available through the Counseling Center, Reading and Studies Skills Center, and the Testing Center.

Library Tour - Become familiar with the general resources of the library, including the reference section.

SESSION VII: Planning Session - Planning for future educational endeavors. A final review of the program's goals and post assessment. Critique and evaluation.